



Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board

Bite-size Briefing: Medical Neglect

February 2017

Medical Neglect

PATIENT RECORD APPOINTMENTS CONTINUATION SHEET

NAME Jade Udale

AGE 5y 2m

NHS No 19211/2377927

ADDRESS 67 Wycroft
Westley
Nottingham



APPOINTMENT DETAILS

15/06 12:10
Dr. G.Stuttart

29/06 09:20
Dr. S.Crombie

12/07 16:55
Dr. J.Talbeam

NOTES

~~Patient did not attend~~

~~DID NOT ATTEND~~

~~Did not attend~~

Was Not Brought

What is medical neglect?

Medical neglect: This involves carers minimising or ignoring children's illness or health (including oral health) needs, and failing to seek medical attention or administering medication and treatments. This is equally relevant to expectant mothers who fail to prepare appropriately for the child's birth, fail to seek ante-natal care, and/or engage in behaviours that place the baby at risk through, for example, substance misuse; (Horwath 2007)

In order to determine whether a child is being neglected, professionals need to consider:

- Severity – the actual or estimated potential harm as well as the degree of harm involved.
- Likelihood of harm – both the potential medical and psychological ramifications should be considered.
- Frequency – measuring the frequency or chronicity of a problem.

(Dubowitz 1999)

What can prevent practitioners from effectively responding to medical neglect?

- Empathy with the parent allows them to overlook risks to the child
- Focus on parental/ family issues rather than impact on child
- Over-reliance on parents self-reporting
- Non-medical practitioners may
 - not fully understand the extent and complexity of the health issues
 - feel more equipped to focus on other issues, rather than addressing medical conditions
 - feel reassured that specialist medical staff are involved with the child, rather than seeing this as an indication of the severity of the medical condition

As practitioners, how can we respond effectively to medical neglect?

- Use clear and explicit language in relation to risks associated with complex medical conditions.
- Seek expert advice if you are not sure of the potential risks to the child.
- Ensure assessments are very clear about needs arising from medical conditions, and the risks associated with any failure by the parent to engage or comply with treatment. The Danger/ Worry Statement* is a good tool for identifying the level of risk and communicating this to other non-medical practitioners and parents.
- Use medical chronologies and medication reviews where appropriate to support referrals to Children's Social Care and within assessments to provide clarity to all involved of the extent, pattern and severity of concern.
- Consider discharge planning meetings for children with complex medical conditions where there is a pattern of admissions to hospital.
- Think differently about the established term 'Did Not Attend' and consider it within a framework of 'Was Not Brought.' Consider the impact of not being brought on the child's treatment and potential safeguarding risks.
- The voice of the child and their lived experience needs to be evident in assessments, inform planning and be present in meetings.
- Be concerned if a parent places age-inappropriate expectations on the child to look after their own medical needs.
- Maintain professional curiosity and do not allow the empathy you feel for the parent to cloud your understanding of what impact their behaviour has on the child.
- Consider the need for a multi-agency meeting to develop a better shared understanding of the level of risk.

Further reading and resources...

- Rethinking 'Did Not Attend' animation - youtu.be/dAdNL6d4lpk - Nottingham City Council, NHS Nottingham City CCG and the NCSCB have jointly commissioned an animation to encourage practitioners to identify children as 'Was Not Brought' as opposed to 'Did Not Attend' when referring to them not being presented at medical appointments.
- NSPCC report *No one noticed, no one heard* can be found here - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/research-and-resources/2013/no-one-noticed-no-one-heard/>
- Check if your own organisation has any specific practice guidance in this area.

* A Danger/ Worry Statement

More information about danger statements can be found within the Signs of Safety information available at:

www.nottingham.gov.uk/children-and-families/safeguarding-children-board/resources-for-professionals/signs-of-safety/

For further information visit:

Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board

www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/ncscb

Or contact us at:

0115 876 4762

safeguarding.partnerships@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

Suggested activity

In your team, watch the Rethinking 'Did Not Attend' animation (youtu.be/dAdNL6d4lpk) and discuss the impact of saying the child 'Was Not Brought' to an appointment, rather than 'Did Not Attend' or 'DNA'.

The video is available in a number of ways. This is because some organisations can have I.T. restrictions on certain websites.

On the NCSCB website:

www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/ncscb

On YouTube without subtitles:

<https://youtu.be/dAdNL6d4lpk>

On YouTube with subtitles:

<https://youtu.be/EfxnqkAR3B4>

On Vimeo without subtitles:

<https://vimeo.com/196256529>

On Vimeo with subtitles:

<https://vimeo.com/201823302>

Nottingham City Council:

www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/static/video/rethinking.mp4

If you are unable to view the video via the above links please email us and we will send you a WeTransfer email with a link to download the file.

Contact us at:

safeguarding.partnerships@nottinghamcity.gov.uk